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ABSTRACT

The guidelines are intended to clarify assessment procedures used with handicapped students in Maine. Based on materials compiled by practitioners in that state, the manual focuses on prevocational and vocational assessments for students in grades 7-12. A three level prevocational (life skills) assessment is proposed, beginning with global assessment and continuing with increasingly detailed analysis of the individual's problems and abilities. Six life skill areas and subskills are outlined: (1) learning and comprehension, (2) manipulative and perceptual skills, (3) motivation, (4) work habits, (5) personal attitudes, and (6) interpersonal relationships. Methods for assessing life skill areas are discussed, including psychometric tests, behavioral observation, examination of school records, and work samples. Vocational assessment is then described in terms of three major components: work sampling, psychometric testing, and critical observation of behavior. Appended material includes a list of psychometric tests for use with handicapped students and examples of self-made work samples. (CL)

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INTRODUCTION

This book on assessment was written to further clarify the meaning of and process of assessment as outlined in the publication Programming for Secondary Age Handicapped Students - Recommendations, published by the Division of Special Education in November, 1981. This publication is the results of the continuing efforts of the Task Force on Secondary Programming.

The material presented in this publication was compiled by practicing educators in Maine. It is the product of the committees efforts in researching the literature on national resources and practices and those resources available in Maine. It is designed to present ideas and tools for the practitioners use. It is intended to present practical activities of assessment that, for the most part, can be accomplished with resources, staff and methods already existing in most Local Education Agencies.

The Task Force would like to emphasize that this information is not intended to be limiting, but to offer guidance as to where to start the assessment process, what procedures have been used successfully and problems that can be avoided at this time.

Assessment is an ongoing process through which information can be gathered about the student's strengths and weaknesses, interests and skills over a period of time. This process has always been a part of special education and should be used for programming planning purposes. At the secondary level (7-12), the utilization of prevocational and vocational assessment is important in order that appropriate vocational programming and academic programming can be identified and developed for the handicapped student.

With this belief the Secondary Task Force and the Division of Special Education have developed this publication to be of assistance in understanding and utilization of assessment as an integral aspect of the special education programming.

PREVOCATIONAL/VOCATIONAL ASSESSMENT

These terms are a source of confusion to the educator. There is inconsistency in the literature about definitions and they have different meanings depending on an individu l's discipline and training. For the purposes of this booklet, prevocational and vocational assessment have been defined as:

> PREVOCATIONAL ASSESSMENT IS PART OF A GLOBAL ASSESSMENT COMPRISED OF THE SIX LIFE SKILL AREAS COMPRISED OF *learning and comprehension; manipulative and perceptual skills; motivation; work habits; personal attitudes and interpersonal relationships. See pages 7 to 18 for a detailed explanation.* These are areas which are prerequisites to occupational training or actual employment.
>
> VOCATIONAL ASSESSMENT INVOLVES TESTING THAT IS JOB SPECIFIC. It determines what common skills are necessary to succeed in a particular occupational activity and measures the students' interest, aptitude and skill level for that cluster of occupations.

Some vocational assessments currently provided to students in Maine also include assessment of the life skill areas. This is particularly true for more severely handicapped students who are later described in this publication as Level III students. When schools implement life skill area (prevocational) assessments at the junior high school level, there will be less need to secure this information in vocational assessments. Vocational assessment can then focus on students' abilities in job specific areas.

When prevocational and vocational assessment are looked at as a continuum, there is no one point where prevocational stops and vocational begins. The purpose of each is to gather information about the student. Some information learned from prevocational assessment may relate to ability to do a specific job.

Both Life Skill (Prevocational) and Vocational Assessment information are gathered by using the same tools. *These include psychometric tests, work samples, behavioral observation and examination of school records.* The tool is neither prevocational or vocational. It is the question you want answered about the student that makes the determination.

Tools will be discussed in detail on pages nineteen through twenty-four.

In determining which type of assessment the educational planner needs, it is helpful to ask: 1) Is this measuring a work and/or vocational aspect or 2) an activity that is a fundamental life skill that needs to be developed prior to a successful attempt at a work activity?

Assessment of basic academic skills assumes primary emphasis at the elementary level. This emphasis should switch to assessment of life skills at the junior high school level and continue until completion of the student's public education.

A general guide to follow is:

- 1st - 6th grade - Primary emphasis on academic skills.
- 7th - 9th grade - Primary emphasis on life skills (pre-vocational) with minor vocational exploration.
- 10th - 12th grade - Primary focus on vocational assessment with minor emphasis in life skills.

How and when this assessment takes place varies with each student but society holds the educational establishment accountable for the level of skills students have achieved by the time they complete public education. To assure that assessments have been made and programming based on these assessments have been carried out during the high school experience, it is important that each school system establish procedures to accomplish this goal.

PREVOCATIONAL ASSESSMENT

Levels of Prevocational Assessment

A three level assessment process is proposed, beginning with a fairly global assessment of all students, and continuing with increasingly detailed analysis of the problems and abilities of individual students as the need for such information becomes apparent.

- Level I student refers to any student whether handicapped or not;
- Level II includes Pupil Evaluation Team identified special education students and non-special education students for whom a Level I assessment does not provide sufficient information for program planning;
- Level III generally includes those students who because of the seriousness of the handicap(s) require especially trained personnel to provide accurate life skill assessments.

By the secondary level of their education, all students deserve to have their progress in attaining LIFE SKILLS evaluated. It is generally assumed that all students have adequate life skills when, in fact, many students not identified as handicapped are lacking in one or more of these skills and require programming to overcome the deficit.

LEVEL I Student

Who is assessed: All students, not just those identified as handicapped.

When to assess: Start at 7th and 8th grades where emphasis should begin to change from academic to life skill areas.

Areas to assess: The six life skill areas of learning and comprehension; manipulative and perceptual skills; motivation; work habits; personal attitudes; and interpersonal relationships. These are core areas only. To what extent each area is assessed depends on student need and level of functioning at that time.

How to gather information: By observation, testing and review of records. This includes observation data gathered from all staff who deal with the student (i.e. bus driver, physical education teacher, etc.). Test results gathered from the system wide testing program that are routinely administered to the school population should be utilized.

Who can summarize and communicate the information? Any member of the staff can be designated to collate the information gathered. Once the information is collected, it should be shared with all staff working with the student.

Funds: Local funds.

LEVEL II Student

Who is assessed: 1) Special Education students identified through the Pupil Evaluation Team process whose present testing or observation data does not furnish the information needed for developing an appropriate program. 2) Non-special education students for whom Level I assessment is completed but for whom more detailed information is required.

When to assess: Start documentation of life skill areas at the 7th and 8th grades when emphasis begins to change from academic to life skill areas. Assessment information may be gathered over a period ranging from several days to several weeks, occurring through the 9th grade or beyond.

Areas to assess: Those life skill areas for which additional information is needed to develop the student's program beyond academics.

How to gather information: By observation, testing and review of records as indicated in Level I.

Plus:

a. Intake interviews with student and parents to obtain work history, expressed interest, etc.);

b. Psychometric tests, which include manual skill and dexterity, tests such as those listed in Appendix A. *In addition, self-made work samples designed around existing Industrial Arts, Home Economics, General Agriculture and Business Education, offer excellent assessment information and should not be overlooked. Examples are located in Appendix B.*

Who can summarize and communicate the information? This is the responsibility of the Pupil Evaluation Team. The information should be shared with all school staff who will be dealing with the student.

Funding: Local funds.

LEVEL III Student

Who to assess: 1) Any students for whom Level I and II assessments do not provide sufficient information to plan their educational programs. 2) Any student who is so severely handicapped that Level I and II assessments would be inaccurate or irrelevant. Generally these would be students who because of their handicapping conditions require a skilled evaluator and more comprehensive tests and observation.

When to assess: From 7th to 12th grade depending on student need.

Areas to be assessed: Those life skill areas for which more detailed information is required to develop the student's program beyond academics. To what extent each area is assessed depends on student need and functioning at that time.

How to gather the information: This assessment generally would be done by skilled evaluators from outside resources such as - rehabilitation facilities. Assessment information obtained from Level I and II will be augmented by this data. Such assessment may take from several days to several weeks.

Who can summarize and communicate the information? A report made by the agency should be communicated to the Pupil Evaluation Team. It should be shared with school staff, parents and others who will be dealing with the student.

Funding: Level III students assessment usually would involve the use of commercial evaluation systems and/or professional evaluators' time and knowledge. The Division of Special Education reimburses local education agencies for this type of expense when contracts are signed and approved prior to the service being provided. Insurance, grants or other sources of payment should be explored.

EXPLANATION OF LIFE SKILL AREAS

The explanation adapted from Work Samples Manual by Dixon and Helms provides a guide for educators to use as:

- A measure of the students readiness to obtain work or to enter occupational training; and
- An assessment of disabilities or deficiencies affecting employability.

Each item in the six life skill areas contain five choices, rated on a *scale indicating demonstrated behaviors and performances which:

1. Are unacceptable even in a highly structured, supportive, non-competitive work setting. There is presently little indication that improvement can be achieved.

2. Are below the level of a highly structured, supportive, non-competitive work setting; however, ability to function within such a work setting may be possible with continued support.

3. Are satisfactory in a highly structured, supportive, non-competitive work setting.

4. Indicate the potential to achieve or approach the criteria for occupational or competitive employment.

5. Are commensurate with standards of a worker in competitive industry or a good candidate for occupational training.

Each individual is to be rated at the level he/she characteristically presently performs.

*This scale is not applicable to individuals with severe hearing, vision or motor losses.

I. LEARNING AND COMPREHENSION

A. Ability To Follow Instructions: Is able to understand how a task is to be done and is able to bring each step in the task to completion,

1. Without success, no matter how directions are given.

2. But continually requires an actual demonstration or explanation by someone.

3. With the assistance of a tape recording and a film strip but cannot do so when instructions are written or diagrammed.

4. When instructions are written or diagrammed with only occasional support.

5. When instructions are written or diagrammed.

B. Retention of Instructions: When knowledge regarding a particular task has been learned or a particular skill is developed,

1. Almost always forgets or loses such knowledge or skill after a short period of time and seems unable to improve in this regard.

2. Frequently forgets or loses such knowledge or skill but is able to make steady improvements.

3. May tend to forget or lose such knowledge or skill but with constant assistance will gradually incorporate these permanently.

4. Is able to retain such knowledge or skill with little assistance.

5. Retains such skills and knowledge over time very easily.

C. Speed of Learning: Seems to grasp instructions and principles involved in the various work tasks,

1. Extremely slowly and with very little improvement over time.

2. Very slowly but seems to make a real effort to increase learning speed.

3. In a moderate amount of time, provided he/she has frequent assistance.

4. About as quickly as most people and requires only occasional assistance.

5. With greater speed than most people and rarely requires assistance.

D. Attention Span:

1. Is unable to attend to the simplest work routine and is so distractable that the slightest interruption will interfere with his/her train of thought.

2. Is very distractable and cannot concentrate on the task at hand but seems to be making an effort to do so.

3. Has difficulty concentrating on each task at hand but with assistance is able to work without interruption for limited periods of time.

4. Is usually able to concentrate on work being done for relatively long periods of time but is occasionally distracted from such work.

5. Has no trouble maintaining sufficient concentration on any given task for long periods of time despite distractions that may exist.

E. Improvement of Performance With Repetition: Taking into account any aid or assistance the supervisor may render as well as the client's own experience gained in re-doing or repeating a given task or operation, the quality of work.

1. Remains consistently poor.

2. Seems to improve only slightly over time, but does seem to make an effort to improve.

3. Can improve steadily with constant assistance and support from the supervisor or others.

4. Improves steadily with some support.

5. Improves rapidly with little or no assistance.

F. Organization of Work and Planning Ability: When a systematic approach to a task or a logical sequence or arrangement of steps in a task are required or can greatly enhance one's performance in completing a particular job, he/she,

1. Seems completely unable to establish an orderly approach to the task and seems unable to improve beyond a haphazard trial and error method of work.

2. Seems unable to establish an orderly approach to the task but may make improvements with constant assistance.

3. Is able to bring some order to the job at hand but requires constant assistance to do so.

4. Is usually able to establish a system or order of his/her own and requires only occasional assistance.

5. Requires little or no assistance in establishing order or planning out any given task.

G. Ability to Measure:

1. Does not have the ability to make even gross measurements with a ruler.

2. Is not able to make measurements but is able to recognize whole numbers and may be able to learn with support, assistance or remediation.

3. Is able to make measurements in fractions of an inch but needs constant assistance and may make frequent errors by as much as 1/4 of an inch.

4. Is able to make measurements in fractions of an inch but frequently makes errors by as much as 1/8 of an inch and needs occasional checks.

5. Consistently makes measurements as accurate as 1/16 of an inch or less without any assistance.

H. Numerical Ability:

1. Cannot perform basic arithmetic operations such as addition and subtraction with the help of a calculator.

2. Is able to perform basic arithmetic operations such as addition and subtraction only with the assistance of a calculator.

3. Is able to perform basic arithmetic operations such as addition and subtraction without a calculator but cannot perform more complex operations such as multiplication and division.

4. Is able to perform arithmetic operations such as multiplication and division without a calculator but often requires assistance.

5. Is able to perform almost all arithmetic operations including percentages and fractions.

II. MANIPULATIVE AND PERCEPTUAL SKILLS

A. Gross Dexterity: In manipulating objects and tools such as hammer, chisel, saw, wire cutters, pliers, screw driver, wrench, riveting gun, paint brush, file, tubing cutter and reamer; or assembling various parts of a unit such as a shock absorber or an electric meter,

1. Does not have the control necessary for adequate handling of objects and does not seem capable of improving.

2. Has a great deal of trouble with hand movements but is making an effort to improve.

3. Is able to control hand movements moderately well with frequent assistance from the supervisor.

4. Is able to use hands well and requires only occasional support.

5. Is able to control hands quickly and accurately and requires little or no help in doing so.

B. Fine Dexterity: In manipulating small objects such as tweezers, bolts, screws, rivets, washers, scribes, compasses, small pipe nipples and elbows,

1. Has so little control of finger movements that grasping, pinching, rotating, or holding on to such objects does not seem possible nor capable of improvement.

2. Has a great deal of trouble in coordinating finger movements yet seems to be making an effort to do so.

3. Is able to coordinate finger movements moderately well with frequent assistance from the supervisor.

4. Is able to coordinate finger movements effectively and requires only occasional assistance.

5. Is able to make very coordinated finger movements quickly and accurately with little or no assistance from the supervisor.

C. Bi-Manual Coordination: In performing operations such as boring a hole through wood with a bit and auger, wrapping an ace bandage around an arm, coiling one wire around another using two pair of pliers, cutting pipe with a hand cutter or threading it with a ratchet threader and die, tightening a pipe assembly using two wrenches simultaneously, fitting and assembling a crankshaft, timing gear or other parts of a small gas powered engine requiring the use of two hands or swagging copper tubing with a flaring bar, swagging tool and hammer,

1. Cannot seem to control the independent movement of both hands at the same time and does not seem able to improve.

2. Has a great deal of trouble in controlling the independent movements of both hands at the same time but seems to be making an effort to do so.

3. Is able to control the independent movements of both hands at the same time moderately well but requires frequent assistance from the supervisor.

4. Is able to control the independent movements of both hands at the same time effectively enough such that only occasional assistance from the supervisor is required.

5. Is able to control the independent movements of both hands at the same time with ease and accuracy.

D. Eye-Hand Coordination: In performing operations such as bandaging an arm, using a tweezer to grasp a gauze, measuring and cutting copper wire, soldering wire or tubing, wrapping electrical tape, starting a bolt or screw into a threaded nut or plate by turning, drawing or scribing a line through two given points with the help of a straight edge, or making an exact cut along a line on a piece of sheet metal or wood with a pair of tin snips or a coping saw; he/she is able to coordinate hand movements in accordance with visual perception,

1. So poorly that improvement does not seem possible.

2. With great difficulty yet seems to be making an effort to improve.

3. Moderately well but requires frequent assistance from the supervisor.

4. Effectively enough, requiring only occasional assistance.

5. With ease and accuracy.

E. Form Perception: When a mistake has been made in an operation such as wrapping a bandage around an arm, coiling one wire around another in a particular way, or drawing a series of lines according to a particular pattern or layout plan; and he/she is provided with a picture, visual display or an actual model with which a comparison can be made.

1. Is never able to discern any noticeable difference between the two.

2. Is apparently not able to discern any difference between the two, yet makes an effort to grasp those aspects that distinguish one from the other.

3. Is able to discern obvious differences in form or pattern but only with constant assistance or support.

4. Is able to discern small differences in form or pattern and requires only occasional assistance.

5. Is able to discern any differences in form or pattern with ease and accuracy.

F. Size Discrimination: When asked to fit various sized nuts to bolts,

1. Is not able to find the matching bolt for any sized nut picked up and does not seem able to make any improvement over repeated trials.

2. Does not seem able to find the matching bolt for nuts picked up, but demonstrates ability and desire to improve.

3. Has great difficulty in finding the right bolt for each nut, succeeding only after a great deal of random trials and errors, yet improvements are made with several trials.

4. Has some difficulty in finding the appropriate bolt for each nut at first, but improves quickly.

5. Has no difficulty in finding the right bolt for each nut and does so quickly and accurately.

III. MOTIVATION

A. Motivation: Actively pursues a given goal,

1. Hardly ever, either failing to understand the desired goal, aggressively opposing the goal,

or ignoring it.

2. With behaviors similar to persons with a rating of (1), but makes a visible effort to improve.

3. Only when closely supervised or given constant support.

4. Usually with only minimal support.

5. Nearly always, expressing enthusiasm.

B. Utilization of Energy: Channels energies into productive work or endeavors,

1. Seldom, preferring idleness, unrelated conversation or activities.

2. With behaviors similar to persons with a rating of (1), but makes a visible effort to improve.

3. Only when closely supervised or given constant support.

4. Usually with only minimal supervision.

5. Nearly always.

C. Speed: Performs the operations necessary to complete the job tasks,

1. Extremely slowly and shows little possibility of improvement.

2. Extremely slowly but makes an effort to improve.

3. At an acceptable rate but requires constant supervision to maintain the pace.

4. Quickly with minimal supervision.

5. Quickly, maintaining a consistent pace.

D. Work Rhythm: Ability to work in an even, regular or patterned manner,

1. Works erratically; unable or unwilling to improve.

2. Works erratically; makes an effort to improve.

3. Works erratically; but occasionally sustains an even or regular pace under close supervision.

4. Usually able to sustain an even or regular pace with minimal supervision.

5. Consistently maintains an even and regular pace.

E. Persistence: Ability to maintain a sustained effort despite obstacles,

1. Gives up easily, frequently stops working at the slightest disruption. May daydream a great deal, consistently takes unauthorized breaks, looks up from work at the slightest noise.

2. Gives up easily, causing a substantial slow down in the work, but makes an effort to control behavior.

3. Occasionally gives up, not fully sustaining the work effort, and periodically stops working before completing the task.

4. Occasionally gives up, but requires only minimal support.

5. Rarely gives up, continues to exert effort toward completion of work task, despite annoyance and disruption in the work environment.

F. Care in Handling: When working with tools and materials, he/she,

1. Constantly slams, bangs or

abuses articles; uses such carelessness and force that articles are bent, broken or otherwise damaged.

2. Rushes through tasks, uses tools hastily or improperly, or makes unnecessary noise.

3. Handles tools at least adequately in a highly structured or closely supervised environment.

4. Exercises great care in operating manual and power equipment with only occasional support.

5. Exercises great care in operating manual and power equipment and utilizes all materials in a methodical way.

C. Craftsmanship (Quality): When assembling, forming or shaping a piece of work that requires thought and skill applied to a series of steps or operations,

1. Is consistently sloppy and inaccurate. Is careless and usually makes many mistakes.

2. Is generally sloppy and inaccurate, but an effort is made to improve.

3. Is occasionally careless, but able to maintain a moderate level of quality with supervision.

4. Is usually neat and accurate if provided minimal supervision.

5. Works in a consistently neat and accurate manner.

IV. WORK HABITS

A. Initiates a Job Task: When arriving for work or transferring to a new work station,

1. Unnecessarily delays beginning work, preferring to engage others in conversation, leave the area for a smoke or trip to the bathroom.

2. Behaves similarly to a person with a rating of (1) but shows signs of improving.

3. Goes right to work only in a highly structured or closely supervised environment.

4. Proceeds with work, requires only occasional support.

5. Proceeds with routine without delay.

B. Seeks Assistance: Requests assistance from the supervisor or others,

1. At inappropriate times, e.g., as a tactic to seek attention or delay completion of a job task. May not seek assistance even after obvious mistakes have been made.

2. Following behaviors similar to a person with rating of (1), but makes an effort to improve.

3. Only after mistakes are made due to poor understanding of instructions.

4. Before any instructions (written, oral, or visual) have been properly scrutinized.

5. Before the task is begun and difficulty in understanding instructions is encountered.

C. Reports Problems: Reports faulty equipment or a dangerous situation,

1. Hardly ever.

2. Occasionally.

3. Only when specifically instructed to do so, and under close supervision.

4. Usually, with occasional assistance.

5. Nearly always.

D. Requests Materials: When supplies or materials are insufficient to finish a task,

1. Quits work and leaves as if finished.

2. Sits and remains idle until approached and asked what the problem is.

3. Notifies the supervisor only when specifically instructed to do so, but expects someone to bring materials or expects specific instructions on what to do.

4. Notifies the supervisor that materials are needed, then waits for someone to bring them.

5. Asks location of materials and gets them.

E. Corrects Errors: When an error occurs or material is spoiled, attempts to correct the error or use new material,

1. Hardly ever, either demands that the supervisor correct the error, demands to terminate the particular job task, or ceases work entirely.

2. Following behaviors similar to a person with rating of (1), but makes an effort to improve.

3. To continue the job task, but only with constant support or close supervision.

4. To continue the job task to completion, occasionally needing assistance.

5. To continue the job task to completion.

F. Follows Safety Procedures:

1. Consistently ignores or does not follow safety instructions and standard safe procedures as directed.

2. Same behaviors as person with rating of (1), but makes an effort to improve.

3. Follows safety procedures only with constant support or close supervision.

4. Usually follows safety procedures, only occasional support needed.

5. Can always be depended upon to follow safety instructions and procedures.

G. Cleans Work Area: The degree of cleanliness and orderliness in which he/she leaves the work area,

1. Consistantly leaves oil, shavings, dye or trash in work area and tools and equipment in disarray.

2. Same behaviors as person with rating of (1), but makes an effort to improve.

3. Leaves an acceptably clean and neat work area only when closely supervised.

4. Usually leaves a clean and neat work area, only occasional support needed.

5. Leaves work area clean and orderly.

V. PERSONAL ATTITUDES

A. Self-Image as a Worker:

1. Perceives self as inadequate, lacks confidence in self, downgrades performance, expects to fail, may refuse to do work samples.

2. Perceives self and work as inadequate, but is making a sincere effort to change.

3. Does not fully perceive self as a competitive worker, but when given constant supervisory support tries all tasks and has some hope of succeeding.

4. Often sees self as a competitive worker. Has some confidence in ability to handle most work problems.

5. Can handle most work problems with no supervision. Confident in approaches chosen to solve problems.

B. Work Attitude: Feelings toward work.

1. Consistently sees no reason to be engaged in acceptable employment. May be hostile, uncooperative, passive-aggressive, and refuse to try to modify work behavior.

2. Poor attitudes, but makes a sincere effort to change when made aware of negativeness by supervisor.

3. Although not committed to the job, will, with constant supervisory attention, sufficiently control negative feelings to function in a marginally acceptable manner.

4. Generally committed to doing what is right on the job. Usually dependable and willing to get the job done. Requires only minimal supervision.

5. Approaches work with enthusiasm.

C. Frustration Tolerance: Ability to maintain self-control, and to cope with the anxieties and annoyances which arise in a work setting.

1. Is easily upset, allowing the slightest annoyance or failure to irritate and cause work to stop completely. Lacks self-control and frequently leaves the job, blames others, breaks work material, becomes loud and angry.

2. Is easily upset, causing a decrease in productivity, but makes some effort to control behavior.

3. Is occasionally upset, allowing frustrating circumstances to interfere with work behavior and performance. Will function only with considerable structure and supervisory support.

4. Is occasionally upset, but employable with minimal support.

5. Is rarely upset, in good control of behavior, and accepts difficulty and disappointment without disrupting work behavior or performance.

D. Amount of Supervision Required: Involves individual self-reliance, independence and initiative.

1. Needs constant prodding to start or continue working. Will frequently avoid starting a task while engaging in inappropriate activity, such as, smoking, talking with others, asking irrelevant questions or staring into space. Is unable to make the simplest decision alone, constantly relies on supervisor for direction and support.

2. Needs occasional prodding, reminding or some incentive either to start or to continue his work. Usually relies on supervisor for guidance and support.

3. Needs occasional support, asks for further assistance or repeated instructions, even though he/she understands what is to be done.

4. Is usually in a state of readiness to work, takes necessary steps to begin his/her job with little assistance, makes most of his/her own decisions.

5. Is independent, rarely requires any support or assistance once given initial instructions. Is able to make his/her own decisions and is a self-starter.

E. Dependability: Can be counted upon to act in accordance with rules, regulations, time schedules and is capable of fulfilling duties and responsibilities,

1. Seldom, is frequently late or absent from work area.

2. Similar behavior as person rated (1), but tries to improve.

3. Usually, but only in a highly structured, supportive noncompetitive work setting.

4. Frequently.

5. Nearly always.

F. Accuracy in Judging Own Work: Self-opinion of quality seems to be honest, realistic and based on an objective appraisal.

1. Either consistently overrated or underrated.

2. Occasionally overrated or underrated, trying to modify appraisal.

3. Fairly realistic in a structured, very supportive environment.

4. Frequently, with some assistance from supervision.

5. Nearly always.

G. Grooming:

1. Consistently unacceptable; e.g., extremely dirty, unshaven, unkept hair.

2. Below usual standards, e.g., bad breath, body order, disheveled hair. However, striving to improve.

3. Maintains, a marginal standard of personal hygiene with constant supervisory assistance; e.g., combs hair, takes baths and occasionally changes clothing.

4. Generally acceptable standard of personal hygiene; e.g., hair neatly cut, clean shaven, proper use of cosmetics.

5. No criteria indicated.

H. Work Attire: The extent to which clothing is suitable for the work setting.

1. Consistantly inappropriate attire that is not amenable to change at this time; e.g., dirty, shabby clothing or bizarre attire.

2. Attire not appropriate to work setting, but discernable attempts being made to modify appearance.

3. Clothing is clean and neat; however close supervision needed to maintain this level.

4. Clothing clean, neat and appropriate.

5. Clothing is always clean, neat, in good taste and enhances overall appearance.

VI. INTERPERSONAL RELATIONSHIPS

A. Cooperativeness With Co-Workers: Selects proper behavior toward co-workers which promotes mutual effectiveness as workers.

1. Avoids co-workers or is so disruptive as to annoy them. Not at present amenable to changing behavior.

2. Avoids co-workers or behaves inappropriately, but indicates willingness and ability to improve.

3. Has some understanding of how to relate to co-workers. Can maintain a marginal level of cooperativeness only with constant support and supervision.

4. Usually sensitive to the needs of co-workers and needs only occasional support to work harmoniously with them.

5. Relates to and shows concern for co-workers.

B. Relationship With Males:

1. Avoids males or behaves inappropriately and annoys them.

2. Same behavior as persons rated (1), but makes some effort to control behavior.

3. Only with constant support and supervision maintains appropriate behaviors and relationships with males.

4. Behaves appropriately in interactions with male co-workers. Generally friendly and polite, maintains a correct decorum in the presence of males with only occasional support.

5. Relates to males in an appropriate and comfortable manner. Makes an effort to promote this type of relationship.

C. Relationship With Females:

1. Avoids females, or behaves inappropriately and annoys them.

2. Same behavior as persons rated (1), but makes some effort to control behavior.

3. Only with constant support and supervision maintains appropriate behaviors and relationships with females.

4. Behaves appropriately in interactions with female co-workers. Generally friendly and polite, maintains a correct decorum in the presence of females with only occasional support.

5. Relates to females in an appropriate and comfortable manner, makes an effort to promote this type of relationship.

D. Cooperativeness With Supervisors:

1. Consistently refuses to accept supervisor's instructions and demands. May be extremely oppositional and behave inappropriately in the presence of authority. Tends to be overbearing, interrupts conversations, or is extremely timid.

2. Same inappropriate behavior as persons rated (1), but makes a sincere effort to change.

3. Has some understanding of the role of the supervisor, but will only accept and respond to his demands when closely supervised.

4. Accepts the demands of his supervisor and behaves appropriately in his absence. Requires only occasional support to maintain this level of behavior and functioning.

5. Understands and accepts the role and importance of supervision as it relates to a work setting. Respects the authority of supervision, and is comfortable in its presence.

E. Specifying What is Unclear:

1. Indicates lack of understanding only after task has been initiated.

2. Behavior similar to person with rating of (1), but shows improvement with continued support.

3. Indicates a problem or lack of understanding before attempting

a task, but does not specify details, depending on the supervisor to read his/her mind.

4. Indicates in general terms what is unclear before beginning a task.

5. Indicates specifically what is unclear before attempting a task.

F. Ability to Express Oneself: The way language is used to express thoughts, ideas, and feelings,

1. Misuses words and cannot express thoughts and feelings clearly and meaningfully. Is not at this time likely to profit from communication skills, remediation, or counseling.

2. Has difficulty expressing thoughts, but improvement is possible through remediation.

3. Expresses thoughts meaningfully but not with clarity. Vocabulary may be limited, speech patterns immature. Has difficulty expressing thoughts with fluency.

4. Expresses thoughts clearly and meaningfully.

5. Expresses thoughts effectively with conciseness and coherence, and usually with good language usage.

G. Accepts Suggestions: The manner in which he/she responds to criticism or suggestions intended to improve the quality of the work.

1. Unable to accept unbiased examinations or behavior or performance. Typically, becomes argumentative when told performance needs improving or behavior is inappropriate. Tends to deny errors or rationalize by projecting poor performance on work materials, tools, peers or supervisors.

2. Has difficulty accepting supervisory judgments, but exhibits some potential for change.

3. Has difficulty accepting constructive criticism, and requires constant special handling from supervisors.

4. Generally able to handle criticism and use it to effect some positive change. Such a participant requires only minimum supervision.

5. Accepts criticism and makes use of it readily and agreeably to effect positive change.

H. Accepts Praise: The manner in which he/she responds to praise in the work setting.

1. Unable to accept a sincere expression of approval without a negative reaction. Typically becomes suspicious, indifferent, reticent, and possibly even angry.

2. Shows little response to expressions of approval but exhibits potential for change.

3. Not fully accepting of praise, but with the constant support of a supervisor will utilize it to a limited degree.

4. Appropriately reacts to favorable statements but is not overtly enthusiastic.

5. Accepts praise in a manner which is enthusiastic and positive.

I. LEARNING AND COMPREHENSION

A. Ability To Follow Instructins
1 2 3 4 5

B. Retention of Instructions
1 2 3 4 5

C. Speed of Learning
1 2 3 4 5

D. Attention Span
1 2 3 4 5

E. Improvement of Performance With Repetition
1 2 3 4 5

F. Organization of Work and Planning Ability
1 2 3 4 5

G. Ability to Measure
1 2 3 4 5

H. Numerical Ability
1 2 3 4 5

II. MANIPULATIVE AND PERCEPTUAL SKILLS

A. Gross Dexterity
1 2 3 4 5

B. Fine Dexterity
1 2 3 4 5

C. Bi-Manual Coordination
1 2 3 4 5

D. Eye-Hand Coordination
1 2 3 4 5

E. Form Perception
1 2 3 4 5

F. Size Discrimination
1 2 3 4 5

III. MOTIVATION

A. Motivation
1 2 3 4 5

B. Utilization of Energy
1 2 3 4 5

C. Speed
1 2 3 4 5

D. Work Rhythm
1 2 3 4 5

E. Persistence
1 2 3 4 5

F. Care in Handling
1 2 3 4 5

G. Craftsmanship (Quality)
1 2 3 4 5

IV. WORK HABITS

A. Initiates a Job Task
1 2 3 4 5

B. Seeks Assistance
1 2 3 4 5

C. Reports Problems
1 2 3 4 5

D. Requests Materials
1 2 3 4 5

E. Corrects Errors
1 2 3 4 5

F. Follows Safety Procedures
1 2 3 4 5

G. Cleans Work Area
1 2 3 4 5

V. PERSONAL ATTITUDES

A. Self-Image as a Worker
1 2 3 4 5

B. Work Attitude
1 2 3 4 5

C. Frustration Tolerance
1 2 3 4 5

D. Amount Supervision Required
1 2 3 4 5

E. Dependability
1 2 3 4 5

F. Accuracy in Judging Own Work
1 2 3 4 5

G. Grooming
1 2 3 4 5

H. Work Attire
1 2 3 4 5

VI. INTERPERSONAL RELATIONSHIPS

A. Cooperativeness With Co-Workers
1 2 3 4 5

B. Relationship With Males
1 2 3 4 5

C. Relationship With Females
1 2 3 4 5

D. Cooperativeness With Supervisors
1 2 3 4 5

E. Specifying What is Unclear
1 2 3 4 5

F. Ability to Express Oneself
1 2 3 4 5

G. Accepts Suggestions
1 2 3 4 5

H. Accepts Praise
1 2 3 4 5

HOW TO DO PREVOCATIONAL ASSESSMENTS

Overview

Assessment of students can be a valuable tool for the teacher. It is aimed at identifying students with learning problems, diagnosing students' academic and life skill strengths and needs. It is usually performed in a classroom setting. Materials designed to be similar to class activities, are used.

There are two main approaches to assessment. The first is to perform one or more procedures which provide data about all the students in a class. The other is to perform increasingly detailed analysis of the problems and abilities of individual students as the need for such information becomes apparent.

Once the needs which will be met by assessment are identified, goals and objectives should be sketched. The teacher will need to consider the following questions:

- Will the assessment procedure be used to refer students for formal evaluation?
- Is information to be used to plan group activities?
- Is information needed to provide for students' individual learning style preferences?
- Is information about students' reading and math skills needed?
- Is it important to know about students' coordination, stamina, fine motor control, or other physical attributes?

The teacher must decide:

- What information is likely to be needed;
- About whom it is needed;
- How the information will be used;
- How the information will be gathered;
- What assessment tools will be selected or developed.

At present there is no neat package of assessment tools for use with each category of handicapped student, however there are several ways for educators to obtain the information. These include psychometric tests, behavioral observation, examination of school records, and work samples.

The methods used to gather life skill assessment information is basically the same for all three levels of students. Psychometric tests, behavioral observation, examination of school records and work samples are used by school staff. These methods, as well as commercial evaluation systems, are utilized by trained evaluators to assess Level III students.

The following section discusses methods that can be used by school personnel to assess life skill areas for Level I and Level II students.

Psychometric Tests

A survey on assessment conducted by the Secondary Task Force among Maine educators in May, 1982, indicated that psychometric tests were the primary tools used in assessing the secondary special needs student. Most educators were developing their own method of assessment through trial and error but expressed a need for more formal and informal tools to use in order to have a more complete picture of the whole student and his or her needs and strengths.

Recently, a few standardized instruments have been developed for use in the classroom or general school setting but most often one must use the resources at hand to design an assessment program appropriate for a particular situation.

Psychometric tests can be a valuable resource if they are carefully selected, administered properly and interpreted correctly. Selection involves matching the student's skills (e.g., mobility, reading level, math level) with the demands of the test, and checking the test's reliability and validity. All too often, this validity/reliability check is not done properly and is not valid if used with particular disability groups. A valuable resource for information about tests appropriate for various disability groups are those school guidance counselors with particular knowledge and training in this area.

Proper interpretation should be provided by the professional giving the test, and summarized in the assessment report. Though many tests require training to administer and interpret, they do not deserve the aura of mystery that sometimes surrounds them. Tests are simply tools and can be used skillfully or poorly just like any other tool.

A list of psychometric tests which may be used is included in Appendix A. The list is not intended to imply that these are the only instruments that should be considered nor does it infer that any one is superior to the other. They are provided solely as information for your consideration.

Behavior Observation

Teachers gather impressions of students' academic and life skill behaviors through incidental observation. The purpose of such observation is to divide the class into two groups according to two basic questions: "Which students demonstrate age-appropriate and grade-level academic and life skill behaviors within the normal range for students in this classroom?" and, "Which pupils stand out in some ways as exhibiting unusual academic or life skill behaviors?" These questions form the basis for determining which students need further diagnosis and which do not. Several cautions should be kept in mind by teachers about observational assessments. They are especially vulnerable to the following problems.

The "halo effect" is a tendency to rate high on all categories because of:

- past record -- Good work in the past tends to carry over (in one's mind) to the present.
- compatibility -- Those one likes are rated higher.
- generalization of excellence -- "If the students can do one thing well, he/she must be good in other areas also."

- timing -- A good job yesterday is valued higher than a good job last week.

The error of severity is the tendency to rate too low because of:

- perfectionism -- The observer's expectations may be too high.
- conflicts -- An individual may disagree too often.
- lack of empathy -- The student may be a maverick or a non-conformist.
- guilt by association -- The student has something in common with a known poor performer.
- dramatic incidents -- A recent error can wipe out the effect of a year's good work.

The error of central tendency occurs when the teacher views all the person's assessed qualities as mediocre or average, whether or not this accurately reflects the person's performance.

Additional factors which could improperly influence the interpretation and use of assessment results include these:

1. Stereotyping due to:
   - prior experience with the student's older sibling.
   - the student's physical appearance or style of dress.
   - the degree to which the student reflects the teacher's values or expresses antagonistic values.
2. Confusion of facts with inferences or judgments.
   - FACTS refers to quantifiable data or verifiable information.
   - INFERENCES are conclusions, interpretations or generalizations made on the basis of data.
   - JUDGMENTS are decisions about what should be done in the light of relevant data and inferences.

One should assume that the first inferences which comes to mind is the only possible one, or even an accurate one.

3. JUDGMENTS are even more prone to error because they are twice removed from the factual information on which they are based. Great care must be taken to insure that judgments such as, "Joe must be transferred from this program," or "Because Charlie is unmotivated and unproductive I can't teach him anything," are based on a number of tightly reasoned inferences. These inferences, in turn, are based on substantial amounts of valid and verifiable information.

THE TWO GREATEST SOURCES OF INAPPROPRIATE ASSESSMENT ARE THE PERSON DOING THE ASSESSMENT AND THE PERSON(S) WHO MAKE EDUCATIONAL DECISIONS BASED ON THE ASSESSMENT RESULTS.

There may be many reasons for below-average results of performances, including stress and poor health. They suggest that the teacher observe the student over a period of some weeks in several different situations to obtain an accurate average picture of the student's behavior in class.

Examination of School Records

Cumulative records can provide useful information about students' past experiences in school. If a teacher's first impression of a student is gained through the records, inaccurate expectations may cloud the teacher's perception of the individual. A low score on a standardized test may reflect a lack of interest in the test situation, rather than a lack of aptitude. Special Education placement in earlier grades may have been the result of a developmental lag which has now been overcome, and may not necessarily indicate current learning problems. With these cautions in mind, however, suggestions are offered for reviewing school records.

- Determination whether the student has recently been referred for special education evaluation.
- Determine the pattern of earned grades in prior years to establish the time of onset of any difficulties.
- Compare the pattern of earned grades with the attendance record.
- Check the number of schools the student has attended. A student who has attended many different schools, especially in the early grades, may have trouble in the basic skills because of a lack of continuity in the way instruction was presented.
- Check standardized tests results with caution. The global percentile rank or grade equivalent scores on standardized tests are not accurate enough to provide needed information about students who are having difficulty in class.
- Check group IQ tests results with equal caution. The results of such tests are designed to indicate a probability range within which the student functions. If he or she felt well and was interested on the day the test was given, may influence the score.
- Check the student's medical or health record, to determine whether a hearing evaluation has been recommended following a sweep check, whether the pupil has passed vision screenings, and whether any chronic illnesses are recorded. The nurse may also know if any medications are administered at home before the pupil comes to school.

Self-Made Work Samples

Work Samples, *which include hands-on manipulative activities necessary to perform some of the routine tasks in laboratories, home economics, industrial arts and general agriculture classes,* can be designed by the teacher for a specific program. Self-made work samples offer many advantages, first, such tests meet the teacher's information needs better than other kinds of tests. Secondly, such tests can be constructed with the specifics of the program in mind. Thirdly, they can often be planned to mesh with ongoing instruction, rather than taking time away from classwork. Fourth, when money is not available to buy commercial tests, self-made work samples may be the only tool available for assessment.

Drawbacks to self-made work samples are mainly those of attitude and time. A teacher who uses informal tests independently to categorize or lable students may be overstepping the intent of such assessment. The educator can appropriately try to answer the question, "Is this student capable of learning from the materials used in my class; and if not, what can I do about this problem?"

The second major drawback to self-made work samples is the time it takes to construct them. Depending on the nature of the tests and the number to be devised, the initial investment of time may be considerable. Two factors serve to ease this burden. First, as long as a course remains basically the same, one test may serve informal assessment needs for a number of years. Also, construction of such tests may take less time as teachers become more practiced in devising and using them.

An explanation of how to make self-made work samples is found on pages 26 and 27.

ASSESSMENT RESULTS AND PLANNING

Assessment is used to create specific educational goals for a student through program planning and curriculum development. It is important to communicate this assessment information to staff, student and parents so all may be aware of the students needs and the role of each in implementation of the planned program. The results should be a document that follows the student from year to year and is amended as additional information is obtained.

The junior high school level is not too early to begin to use assessment information to start long range planning for the several remaining years of the student's education. It is possible to derive implications for the student's vocational program in later years from this assessment. It is most helpful to have as much information as possible available before planning the student's high school program.

Because the student ultimately must use his or her skills as an adult, it is important to determine if the individual can transfer learned skills from the classroom setting to practical application in everyday living or occupational settings. The more assessment includes information on the students ability to function in the community, the greater value it has in planning for the student.

SUMMARY

Assessment of Life Skill (Prevocational) areas is essential for both short and long range educational planning of all students. By the secondary level all students deserve to have their progress in attaining these skills evaluated.

Evaluation of Life Skills should begin with a global assessment of all students and continue with increasingly detailed analysis of the students strengths and problems as the need develops. Methods and tools used to gather assessment information are varied and, for the most part, are available within the educators resources.

It is through assessment of Life Skills areas and programming to develop these skills that educators prepare all students, handicapped or not, to participate in occupational experiences and to live as contributing members of the community.

VOCATIONAL ASSESSMENT

Vocational assessment should be conducted by a professionally trained individual because it is a process which requires specialized knowledge and training. A general description of vocational assessment is being provided to give you a better understanding of the process, what to expect from it and what questions the assessment may answer.

Introduction

Vocational assessment is a multi-dimensional approach to planning and implementation of an individual's career, vocational training, and subsequent employment. This process helps determine an individual's assets and skill deficits. Results of the assessment process include development of an aptitude profile and an interest profile. They also include a physical status summary, a description of the individual's behavior in various controlled settings, and a vocational skill profile.

Two major purposes of vocational assessment are:

- To provide information for administrative decisions concerning the classification of individuals in order to assign them appropriately to existing programs.
- To provide information needed to individualize the design, implementation, and evaluation of programs or training provided to each handicapped student.

Formal assessment must relate classification decisions to training options. Without such integration, assessment is useful only for administrative purposes, not training objectives for the special needs student.

To insure appropriate decision-making, initial assessment procedures should encompass different behavior domains, instructional formats, and difficulty levels. Specifically, formal vocational assessment should:

1. Help the student explore vocational areas and make career choices.
2. Help the teacher determine the student's skills.
3. Determine which learning approaches are best for the student.
4. Determine how well the student can perform skills learned during assessment and under what conditions optimum performance occurs.
5. Provide direction for programming, and offer precise recommendations concerning skills needing further vocational development.

How the Assessment Process is Carried Out

Vocational assessment consists of three major components: *work sampling, psychometric testing and critical observation of behavior.* Supplemental components round out the process.

An effective work sample parallels a specific or general work environment in its cognitive and performance requirements, physical demands, decision-making requirements, work aids, tools and equipment. This environment can be changed to meet the physical and mental needs and limitations of each individual involved. The evaluator's assessment techniques are crucial to effective use of work samples. These techniques vary according to the needs of each individual and the outcomes desired. A basic function of work samples in almost any setting is to provide "hands-on" exposure to a work environment, and aid in career exploration. The more closely a work sample resembles a job, or elements of a job, the easier it is for the individual to compare his or her abilities and interests to the demands of the job in question.

Self-Made Work Samples

A work sample is a carefully constructed test of a student's ability to perform a sample task related to the vocational area in which he or she is interested.

- Work samples afford the opportunity to observe actual work behavior in a controlled setting.
- Persons who are evaluated through work sampling see themselves as working, rather than taking a test. They have a more positive attitude toward the experience, are more interested in the task, and will expend greater effort on it.
- A more realistic picture of the student's capabilities can be gained because factors affecting test scores, such as insufficient motivation, excessive anxiety, cultural differences, and language disabilities are less likely to influence work samples.

Two approaches can be used to select tasks which may be appropriate for a work sample:

1. In order of frequency, list tasks that are most commonly performed in the vocational field.
2. Identify tasks requiring competencies that are representative of the occupation as a whole.

Using either one or both criteria together, the evaluator should try to identify at least five tasks. The selection of one of these five tasks best suited for development as a work sample is based on six issues:

a. Which task is most representative of the occupation?

b. Which requires a progression from simple to more complex behaviors?

c. Which requires both gross and fine motor skills?

d. Which does not require too much reading?

e. Which can be completed in a short or manageable length of time?

f. Which is complex enough to allow observation of emotions and attitudes such as frustration or persistence?

The task which seems to best answer these six questions should be selected for development as a work sample. The recommended procedure is for the evaluator to demonstrate the work sample task, and then ask the student to perform it. If any reading is required, the material should be written at about the fifth grade level.

Commercial Work Samples

There is a wide variety of commercial work samples and work sample systems available. These commercial systems vary widely in price, validity, reliability and the degree of training needed to administer and interpret them. A list of commonly used commercial work sample systems is located in Appendix C. Mention of these systems does not imply endorsement nor does omission of any imply a lack of value in other commercial systems.

Before using either self-made or commercial work samples, the following questions should be reviewed:

- Do the samples take into account:

  the possible expectancy to fail?
  academic limitations?
  verbal limitations?
  limited experience?

- Do the samples allow for more than one trial on each task?

- Do the samples allow for repreated instruction and checks for comprehension?

- Is there any evidence that the samples are valid (measure what they intend to measure) and reliable (measure it consistently and accurately)?

- Do the samples allow for appropriate testing conditions (pleasant surroundings, orderly administrations, consideration of fatigue)?

Psychometric Testing

There are several ways that psychometric tests can contribute to the vocational assessment process; however, when attempting to determine the vocational interests of special needs students, keep in mind that many will lack one or both fundamental ingredients of occupational selection; i.e., adequate occupational information and/or decision-making skills.

1. Planning the evaluation

   The evaluator may use testing to determine the student's interests, aptitudes, and literacy skills. A multi-aptitude battery, together with a broad-based interest inventory may be used. The results must be discussed with the student and used to help plan the rest of the evaluation.

2. Determining possible causality

   A student may do poorly on work samples in which the only common requirement may be the ability to visualize three-dimensional objects from diagrams and blueprints. The student may then be given a test of spatial ability to see if this accounts for the poor results. Other assessment techniques can also be used to substantiate tests. Tests or any other technique are not the ultimate criteria. One must cross-check the results of several measures against each other to determine whether or not they are consistent. If they are inconsistent, it is important to determine the reason.

3. Deciding between alternatives

   A student may do well on work samples in both the clerical and sewing areas, and has verbally expressed an interest in both. Other results agree that both areas are within the student's ability. In helping the student decide between these two areas, compile and provide additional occupational information and discuss the local job market. At this point, tests can provide a more covert determination of interests and needs. These tests could provide useful information not otherwise attainable. All sources of information can then be weighed by the evaluator and student in order to make a decision.

4. Answering questions or hypotheses raised by the student's prior experience or evaluation results.

   A student may have a job history which shows that he or she had several clerical jobs for short durations. Clerical tests and work samples reveal no skill deficiencies. Behavioral observations show no overt problems, and he or she is unable to explain the poor employment history. The following hypotheses could be examined with tests: 1) the person has a personality or psychiatric problem that manifests itself only while on the job; 2) the person's intelligence may be extremely high, causing boredom and resulting in frequent job changes; and 3) the person may not really be interested in clerical work. The use of tests to answer these hypotheses would be discussed with the student. One hypothesis at a time would be investigated.

Critical Observation of Behavior

Behavior observation is the primary tool used in "situational assessment." Situation Assessment is the "systematic procedure for observing, recording, and interpreting work behavior. One of the underlying assumptions of observation is that behavior is determined both by the person and the situation. Any attempt to isolate one from the other, or neglect the context, results in loss of data and misinterpretation."

Observing students in the class or on the job can usually provide a better idea of the student's vocational capabilities than reliance on tests or work samples alone. Skilled observation requires sensitive, objective, and experienced observers who have common sense. Several factors should be kept in mind when making an observation.

- The more natural the situation the more likely the person's actions will reflect characteristic behavior.
- An observation reflects only present functioning, not what the person could do after proper training.
- Physical factors may profoundly affect behavior.
- Inconsistencies in behavior may be important.
- Stereotypes can influence an evaluator's perceptions of observed behavior.

Assessment that relies on the observation and recording of student performance in a work setting has several advantages over other approaches to work evaluation:

- It eliminates the typical testing situation, and accompanying anxiety, that standardized testing and work samples present.
- The evaluator can assess many work behaviors that cannot be assessed with standardized vocational tests and work samples, such as interpersonal relationships, cooperation, response to work pressures, and response to orders from supervisors.
- Such "situational" assessment is less expensive and less time consuming than work samples.
- It provides an opportunity to view and evaluate the individual in a setting where typical behaviors are more likely to be seen.
- It gives the individual an opportunity to be evaluated by several staff members in several work situations.
- An individual can be evaluated under various conditions, including different types of supervisors, co-workers, and circumstances. These conditions can be varied systematically.

The situational assessment procedure also presents disadvantages:

- It is highly dependent upon accurate interpretation of observed behavior and performance.
- The measures used to evaluate observed behavior are generally more subject to variance among observers.
- Much evaluation time is wasted if the student is not routinely evaluated.

Use of Vocational Assessment Results

Frequently, vocational evaluation reports are vague and general because the educator requesting the evaluation asked vague and general questions.

Referral questions should focus on problems which can be observed. They should state the problem(s) precisely, and be supported by any relevant assessment data that the teacher can supply.

In reviewing vocational assessment results, look for the following:

1. Math and reading levels.
2. Comments about the student's persistence, attitude, and behavior.
3. Descriptions of the student's preferred learning style, speed of learning, and accuracy (including what new skills the student learned and the conditions under which this learning occurred).
4. Physical capacities (endurance, strength, coordination) and limitations.
5. Vocational interests, aptitudes and experiences.
6. The answers to any specific questions asked in the referral.

This information should be interpreted in the context of: 1) the student's feelings about entering a specific program, 2) jobs within a vocational area for which the student could train, and 3) short term objectives the student could achieve.

If assessment results do not seem to make sense, ask the evaluator or other knowledgeable person to provide a clarification.

Summary

Vocational assessment encompasses a variety of formal and informal evaluation procedures, including paper and pencil tests, manipulative instruments, work samples, situational assessment in exploratory courses, labs or regular vocational courses, and work experience situations. It is a process in which a handicapped student gains insight into his or her interests, abilities, and preferred work environments.

"While formal vocational assessment is a time-limited and concentrated process, assessment is inherently continuous." The handicapped student's abilities and interests should be reevaluated frequently as he or she progresses through the stages of vocational preparation.

The student should be actively involved in the evaluation process. Like vocational counseling, which is itself an important component of the total assessment process, assessment should be done with, not to the student. Parents and school staff should assist the student in making a realistic career choice, but this is ultimately a decision the student alone must make.

APPENDIX

APPENDIX A

This list of psychometric tests that can be used with handicapped students was taken from Vocational Preparation of Persons With Handicaps.

Name of test	Publisher	Type of test	Type of handicap
Adult Basic Learning Exams (ABLE)	Psychological Corporation	Educational	All handicaps (with modification)
AAMD Adaptive Behavior Scale (new Public School Version and original Scale for Children & Adults -- Institutional)	Publishers Test Service	Social	MR
AAMD Becker Reading Free - Interest Inventory	American Association on Mental Deficiency	Vocational Interest	MR
Brigance Diagnostic Inventory of Essential Skills	Curriculum Associates	Educational	Most handicaps
California Psychological Inventory	Consulting Psychologists Press	Personality	ED and certain others
California Test of Personality	California Test Bureau	Personality	All handicaps
Edwards Personal Preference Schedule	Psychological Corporation	Personality	LD,CP,OH,HI
Gates-MacGinitie Reading Test	Teachers College Press	Educational	LD,CP,ED,OH,HI
Haptic Intelligence Scale for Adult Blind	Psychology Research	Intelligence	VI
Minnesota Multiphasic Personality Inventory (MMPI)	Psychological Corporation	Personality	All handicaps (but limited with MR)

Code: LD - learning disability
CP - cerebral palsy
HI - hearing impaired
ED - emotionally disturbed
MR - mentally retarded
VI - visually impaired
OH - orthopedically handicapped

Name of test	Publisher	Type of test	Type of handicap
Mooney Problem Check List	Psychological Corporation	Social/ Personality	LD,CP,ED,OH,HI
Peabody Individual Achievement Test	American Guidance Service	Educational	LD,CP,ED,MR,OH (perhaps VI,HI)
Peabody Picture Vocabulary Test (PPVT)	American Guidance Service	Educational	MR and certain others
Rotter Incomplete Sentences Blank	Psychological Corporation	Personality	All handicaps
San Francisco Vocational Competency Scale	Psychological Corporation	Social and vocational	MR
Social and Prevocational Information Battery (SPIB)	CTB/McGraw-Hill	Social	MR
Vineland Social Maturity Scale	American Guidance Service	Social	All handicaps (special considerations for some)
WAIS-R and WISC-R	Psychological Corporation	Intelligence (personality)	All handicaps (limited use with VI and HI)
Wide-Range Achievement Test (WRAT)	Jastak Associates	Educational	All but perhaps the HI

Psychometric Tests

Name of test	Publisher	Type handicap	Description
Appraisal of Occupational Aptitudes	Houghton-Mifflin Co.	All but VI	Measures clerical ability such as checking letters and numbers, filing names and numbers, math, and reasoning.
Bennett Hand Tool Dexterity Test	Psychological Corporation	All but VI	Measures proficiency with ordinary mechanics' tools. Testee assembles and disassembles different-size nuts and bolts. Timed.
Bennett Mechanical Comprehension Test (BMCT)	Psychological Corporation	All but VI (some mild MR)	Group-administered, paper-pencil test. Six illustrations demonstrate the relationship of physical forces and mechanical elements in practical situations.
Crawford Small Parts Dexterity Test	Psychological Corporation	LD,ED,MR,HI (some CP,OH)	Assesses fine eye-hand coordination, using small tools. Testee inserts small parts into work surface--small pins into holes and collar on top, using tweezers. Uses screwdriver to insert screws into plate.
Differential Aptitude Test (DAT)	Psychological Corporation	All but VI	Group administered, pencil-paper. Eight sections: verbal reasoning, numerical ability, abstract reasoning, clerical speed and accuracy, mechanical reasoning, space relations, spelling, language usage. Two hour limit. Requires 6th-grade reading.
General Aptitude Test Battery (GATB)	U.S. Department of Labor	All handicaps but VI, but considerations for CP,MR,OH, HI	Measures nine aptitudes with 12 subtests. Requires 6th-grade reading. Aptitudes measured: general learning, verbal, numerical, spatial,

Name of test	Publisher	Type handicap	Description
			clerical, form perception, motor coordination, finger dexterity, and manual dexterity.
General Clerical Test	Psychological Corporation	CP,ED,OH,HI	Group administered, paper-pencil test. Requires 6th-grade reading. Nine skill areas: checking, alphabetizing, arithmetic computation, error location, arithmetic reasoning, spelling, reading comprehension, vocabulary, grammar.
MacQuarie Test for Mechanical Ability	California Test Bureau	All but VI	Measures eye-hand coordination and finger dexterity required for office and factory tasks. A nonverbal, paper-and-pencil test with seven subtests: tracing, tapping, dotting, copying, location, blocks, and pursuit.
The Minnesota Rate of Manipulation Test	American Guidance Service	LD,ED,MR,HI (limited with CP,OH)	Group or individually administered. Board with 60 blocks; testee performs five different manipulation tasks. Measures hand and finger dexterity.
Minnesota Spatial Relations Test	American Guidance Service	All handicaps	Measures speed and accuracy in discriminating among odd sizes and shapes. Consists of four form boards containing 58 cutouts each.
Nonreading Aptitude Test Battery (NATB)	U.S. Department of Labor	All but OH and VI	The nonreading counterpart of the GATB -- especially for persons who are retarded.
O'Connor Finger and Tweezer Dexterity Tests	C. H. Stoelting Co.	All but VI	Measures motor coordination and manual dexterity. Finger test to insert pins into 100 small holes. Tweezer task to pick up the pins and put them into hole.

Name of test	Publisher	Type handicap	Description
Pennsylvania Bi-Manual Test	American Guidance Service	All handicaps	Measures five-finger dexterity, gross arm movements, and eye-hand coordination. Task to assemble 105 nuts and bolts on a board and then disassemble them.
Purdue Pegboard	Science Research Associates, Inc.	All handicaps, but special provisions needed for OH,VI,HI	Measures dexterity for two types of activity: gross movements of hands, fingers, and arms, and fingertip dexterity. Timed.
Revised Minnesota Paper Form Board Test	Psychological Corporation	All handicaps but VI	Group administered, paper-pencil test. Measures mechanical aptitude and spatial perception. There are 64 two-dimensional diagrams, five figures per diagram. Testee must select correct shape of original diagram. Twenty-minute limit.
Stromberg Dexterity Test	Psychological Corporation	All but VI	Measures speed and accuracy. Consists of 54 red, blue, and yellow discs along with a board containing 54 holes on one side.
Typing Test for Business	Psychological Corporation	All but VI (some MR,CP,OH)	Group or individually administered. Five units: straight copy, revised manuscript, letters, numbers, and tables. One-hour limit. Requires 6th-grade reading.
Career Assesment Inventory	National Computer Systems, Inc.	All but VI (requires 6th-grade reading)	Measures vocational interests related to John Holland's occupational-types theory. Testee indicates preferences for various activities, school subjects, and occupations. Group or individually administered.

Name of test	Publisher	Type handicap	Description
Geist Picture Interest Inventory	Western Psychological Corporation	All but VI (some reading)	Measures interests in 11 areas. Has 44 items, three pictures per item. Also looks at the motivating force behind the choice.
Gordon Occupational Checklist	Harcourt, Brace, and World, Inc.	All handicaps (if verbally presented)	Checklist of 240 activities grouped into five interest clusters that relate to many different jobs. Person chooses activities of interest.
Minnesota Importance Questionnaire (MIQ)	Vocational Psychology Research at Univ. of Minn.	All handicaps. (If read) 5th-grade reading	Measures 20 vocational needs--ability utilization, achievement, activity, advancement, authority, etc. Testee chooses the one of two statements that would be the more important in an ideal job.
Minnesota Vocational Interest Inventory (MVII)	Psychological Corporation	All but MR and VI (9th-grade reading)	Self-administered, has 474 items grouped in 158 trades, describing different activities performed by skilled tradesmen.
Occupational Interest Inventory (OII)	California Test Bureau	All but MR and VI	Measures: Fields of Interest: personal-social, natural, mechanical, business, the arts, and the sciences; Types of Interests: verbal, manipulative, and computational; and Levels of Interests. Paper-and-pencil administered in groups or individually. Related to Dictionary of Occupational Titles.
Picture Inventory Interest (PII)	California Test Bureau	All but VI	Nonreading measure that identifies fields and patterns of occupational interests. Testees rate sketches of situations having vocational significance.

Name of test	Publisher	Type handicap	Description
Reading-Free Vocational Interest Inventory	American Association in Mental Deficiency	MR	Pictorial measure--three choices to determine interest areas. Male: automotive, building trades, clerical, animal care, food service, patient care, horticultural, janitorial, personal service, laundry, and materials handling. Female: laundry, light industrial, clerical, personal service, food service, patient care, horticultural, and housekeeping.
Wide-Range Interest and Opinion Test (WRIOT)	Jastak Associates, Inc.	All handicaps	Pictorial measure, 150 sets of three pictures. Has 18 clusters of occupational interests (art, literature, music, drama, sales, etc.). Eight clusters refer to one's attitudes, particularly toward work conditions. Given individually or in groups.

APPENDIX B

SELF-MADE WORK SAMPLES

These examples were provided by the Tri-District Training Program

Name: _____

1. Measure shortening correctly
2. Make powdered milk
3. Knowledge of 1/3 c., 1 3/4 c., 2 1/2 tsp., 3/4 tsp., 3/4 c.
4. Identification of ingredients
   - shortening
   - flour
   - baking powder
   - salt
   - milk
5. Turn on oven
6. Identification of needed equipment
   - pastry blender
   - cookie sheet
   - biscuit cutter
7. Running oven timer
8. Safety with oven
9. Appearance of product
10. Personal cleanliness
11. Finding page in cookbook

Using a Betty Crocker cookbook, turn to page 194 and make baking powder biscuits.

Working by yourself, you must:

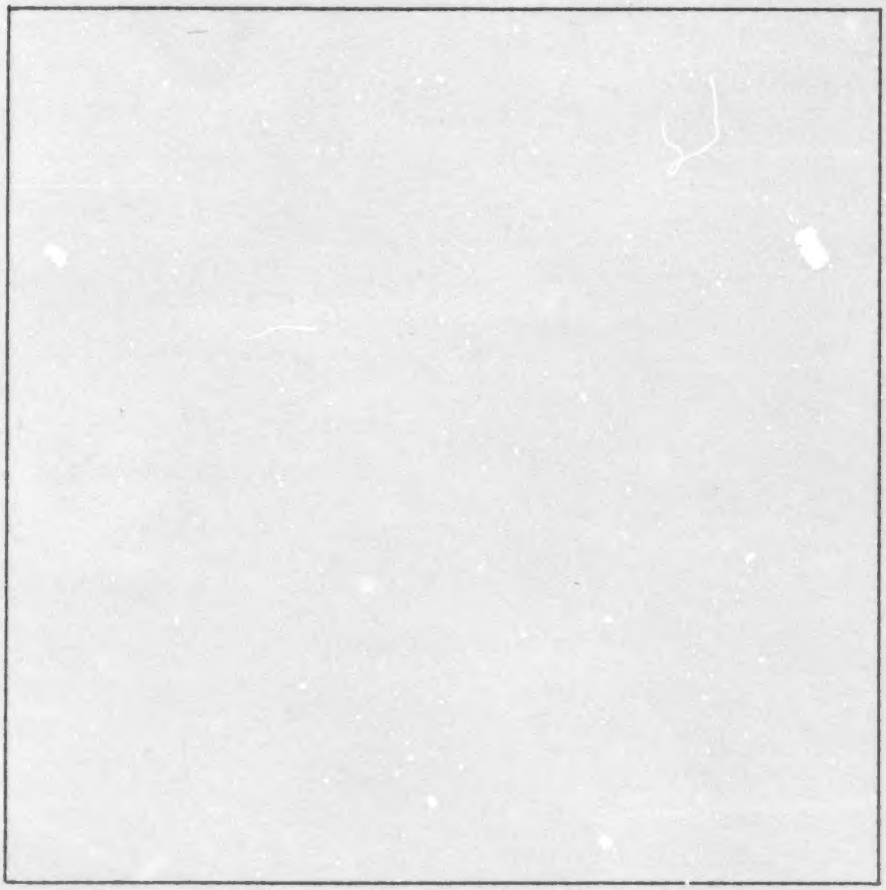
1. wash hands and fix hair back
2. read the recipe
3. find ingredients and equipment needed
4. measure ingredients
5. turn on oven
6. use oven timer
7. wash dishes
8. put dishes and ingredients away
9. clean work area
10. take biscuits out of oven when done.

You will need:

a piece of pine board	hand drill
pencil	3/8" drill bit
try square	sandpaper (150 + 220 grit)
handsaw	

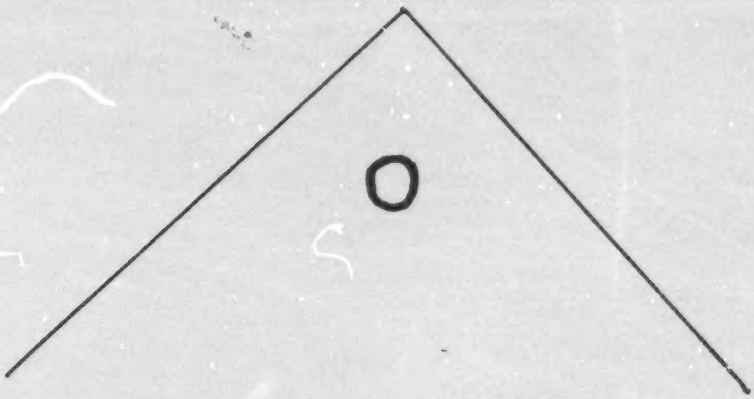
STEP 1

Cut board into a 5" square



STEP 2

Drill a 3/8" diameter hole, 1" down from top point

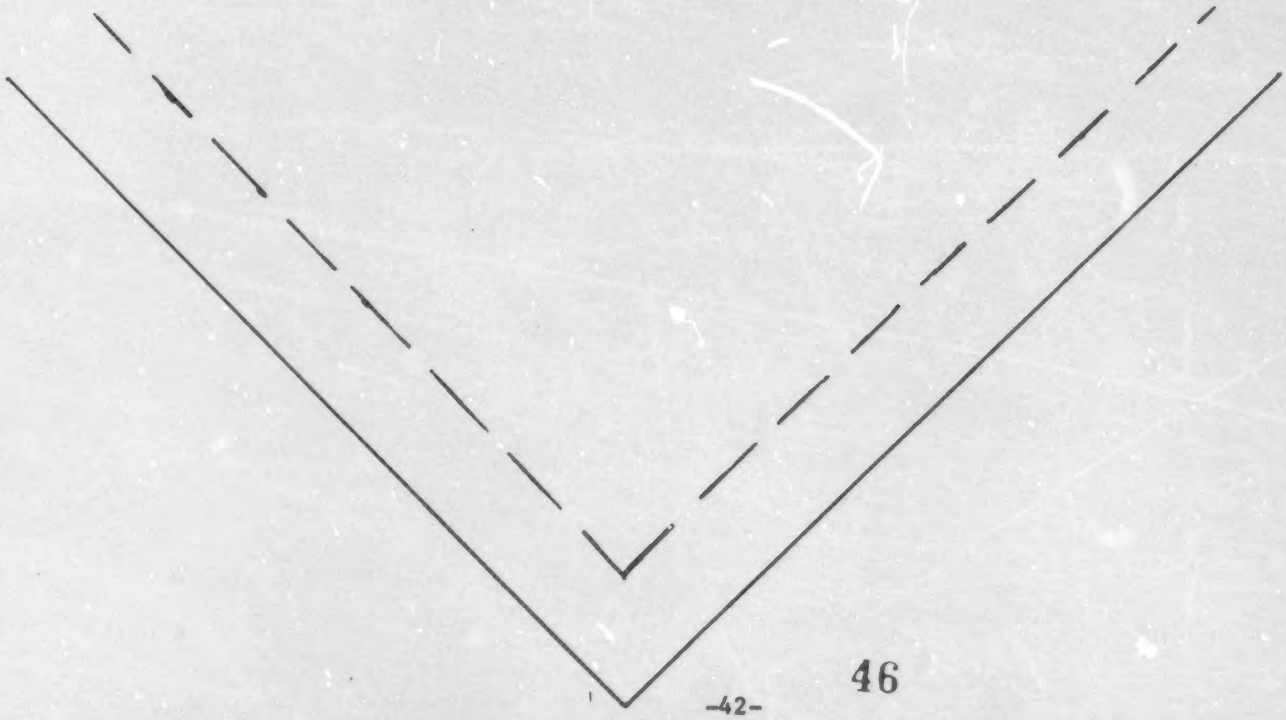


STEP 3

Sand square smooth, using 150 grit, then 220 grit

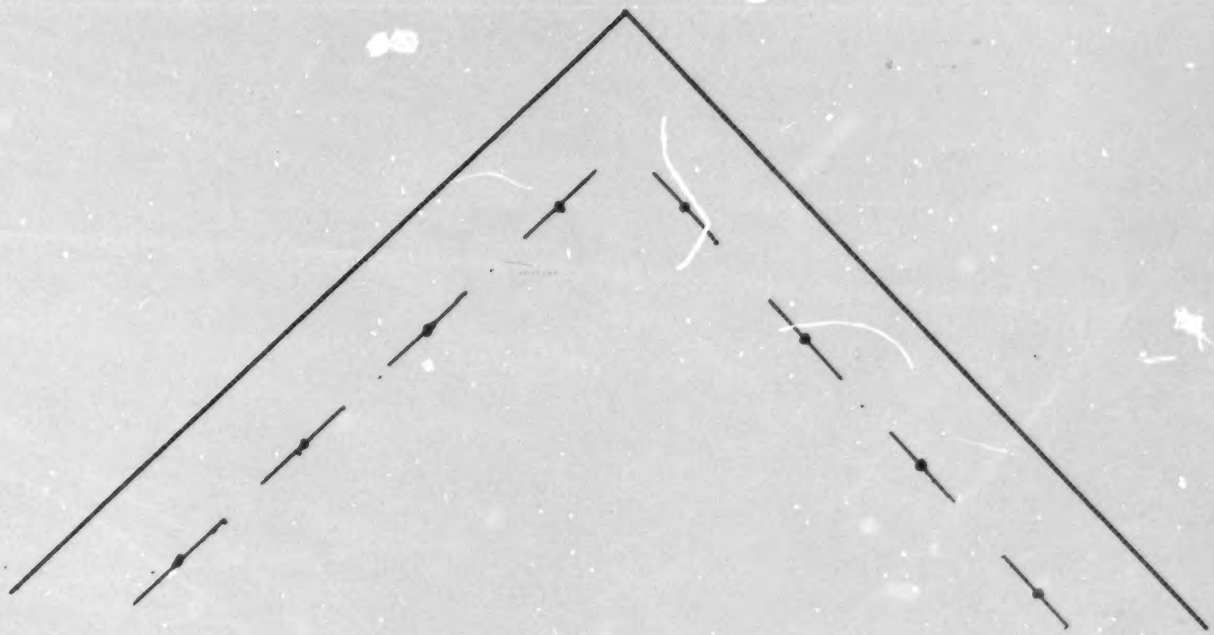
STEP 4

Mark a line 1/2" in from bottom sides



STEP 5

Mark 8 dots on your line, 1" apart



STEP 6

Screw one eye hook into each dot.

I. Introduction

During this work sample the student will:

1. wash the hospital bed
2. make the hospital bed
3. take, read and record his/her temperature
4. read 10 medicine labels

II. Instructions to the Evaluator

A. Prerequisites -- There is no time limit on this work sample, although the student should be encouraged to work at a steady pace.

B. Administration Equipment -- The following equipment should be available prior to administration:

pencil	water	blanket
work sheet	disinfectant	bedspread
thermometer	washcloth	pillow
hospital bed	set of sheets	
cleaning pail	pillowcase	

C. Set up and Breakdown -- Student will wash the hospital bed, make the bed, strip the bed and fold the sheets, etc. Also take, read and record their temperature.

III. Administration

A. Student Orientation -- The following should be read to the student before the actual instructions are given.

> This is not a test, but is an evaluation to help us know where your interests and abilities are so we can prepare your program for next semester.
>
> Please follow the directions as well as you can, but do not hesitate to ask any question you may have concerning what you are doing.

Name: _____

School: _____

Age: _____ Birthdate: _____

Step 1 --- Using the equipment provided, wash the hospital bed.

Step 2 --- Using the sheets, pillowcase, blanket and bedspread, make the bed. (Be sure to use hospital corners)

Step 3 --- Unmake the bed. Fold all linen so it is ready for the next person.

Step 4 --- Take your temperature. Record what the thermometer reads _____.

Step 5 --- Read the following medicine labels to the teacher.

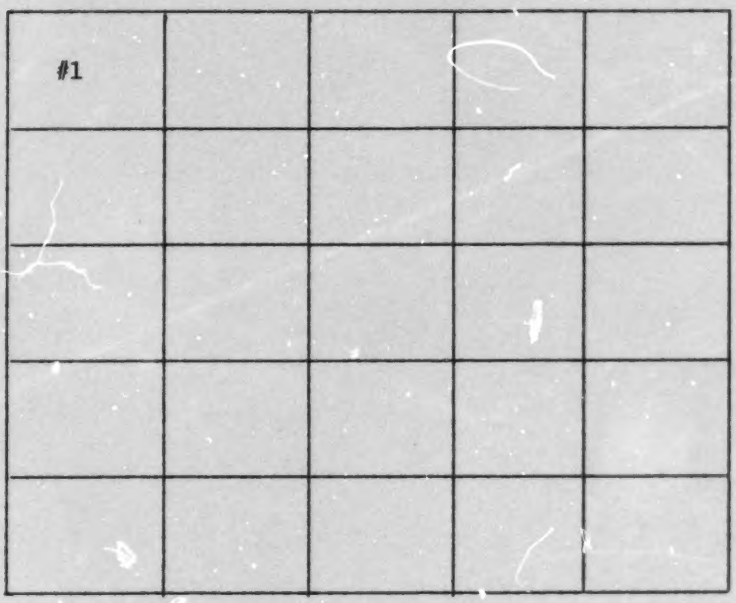
A. _____
B. _____
C. _____
D. _____
E. _____
F. _____
G. _____
H. _____
I. _____
J. _____

Name: _____

1. Knowledge of pattern
2. Identification of equipment needed
   - shears
   - pins
   - pattern
   - cloth
3. Threading sewing machine
4. Winding bobbin
5. Making seams
6. Artistic flair
7. Right sides together
8. Hand sewing skill

Patchwork Pillow

1. Make a pattern piece 5 inches square out of a piece of paper.
2. Cut out 25 squares of different fabrics.
3. Arrange in design.
4. Make a design of your pillow on a graph.
5. Pin pieces with right sides together into strips.
6. Stitch at 5/8" seams.
7. Press seams open.
8. Sew strips together matching pieces - sew 5/8".
9. Press long seams.
10. Using front as a guide, cut out a backing.
11. Put right sides together, pin and stitch all but a 4 inch opening along one side.
12. Clip corners, turn right side out.
13. Stuff and slip stitch opening closed.



Name: _____

Date: _____

STEP 1

Materials needed:

small flat	sand
trowel	top soil
small flower pot	peralite

Mix sand, top soil and peralite in small flat. Use them in equal amounts. This is now called soil.

STEP 2

Materials needed:

trowel	soil
flower pot	seedling or plant

Put small amount of soil into bottom of flower pot. Remove seedling/plant from flower box, using trowel. Place seedling/plant into flower pot.

Add enough soil to the flower pot to support the seedling/plant, and fill the pot to within 1/2" from the top edge.

STEP 3

Materials needed:

water	watering can

Water the newly potted seedling/plant. Place the transplanted, watered plant on the table by the window.

STEP 4

Materials needed:

broom	dustpan

Return all equipment to area where you found it. Clean off your work surface. Sweep the floor around the work space. Return broom and dustpan to storage area.

STEP 5

Materials needed:

pencil

piece of paper

masking tape

Put your name on the pot of the seedling/plant you transplanted.

Return the work sheet to the evaluator.

APPENDIX C

Commercial Evaluation Systems

Descriptions of these commercial systems and their cost can be found in the following publication:

A Comparison of Commercial Evaluation Systems
The Materials Development Center
Stout Vocational Rehabilitation Institute
University of Wisconsin - Menomonie
1980
Author: Carl F. Botterbush, Ph.D.
Cost: $5.00

Names and addresses of systems described in the book are:

Comprehensive Occupational Assessment
and Training System (COATS)
PREP Inc.
1575 Parkway Avenue
Trenton, New Jersey 08628

Hester Evaluation System
Evaluation Systems, Inc.
640 N. LaSalle Street, Suite 698
Chicago, Illinois 60610

McCarron-Dial Work Evaluation Systems
P.O. Box 45628
Dallas, Texas 75245

MICRO-TOWER
ICD Rehabilitation and Research Center
340 East 24th Street
New York, New York 10010

Philadelphia Jewish Employment & Vocational Service
Work Sample System (JEVS)
Vocational Research Institute
Jewish Employment and Vocational Service
1700 Sansom Street, 9th floor
Philadelphia, Pennsylvania 19103

Pre-vocational Readiness Battery (Valpar 17)
Valpar Corporation
3801 E. 34th Street, Suite 105
Tucson, Arizona 85713

Talent Assessment Programs (TAP)
Talent Assessment, Inc.
P.O. Box 5087
Jacksonville, Florida 32207

The TOWER System
ICD Rehabilitation & Research Center
340 East 24th Street
New York, New York 10010

Valpar Component Work Sample Series (VALPAR)
Valpar Corporation
3801 East 34th Street
Tucson, Arizona 85713

Vocational Evaluation System (SINGER)
Singer Educational Division
Career Systems
80 Commerce Drive
Rochester, New York 14623

Vocational Information & Evaluation Work Samples (VIEWS)
Vocational Research Institute
Jewish Employment & Vocational Service
1700 Sansom Street, 9th floor
Philadelphia, Pennsylvania 19103

Vocational Interest Temperament & Aptitude System (VITAS)
Vocational Research Institute
Jewish Employment & Vocational Service
1700 Sansom Street, 9th floor
Philadelphia, Pennsylvania 19103

Vocational Skills Assessment & Development Program
(Brodhead-Garrett)
Brodhead-Garrett Company
4560 East 71st Street
Cleveland, Ohio 44105

Wide Range Employment Sample Test (WREST)
Jastak Associates, Inc.
1526 Gilpin Avenue
Wilmington, Delaware 19806

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2. Tindall, Lloyd W. Puzzled About Educating Special Needs Students? Wisconsin Vocational Center, University of Wisconsin - Madison. May, 1980.

3. Brolin, Donn E. Vocational Preparation of Persons With Handicaps. Charles E. Merrill Publishing Comp., Columbus, Ohio. 1982.

4. Vocational Assessment of Handicapped Students: Dallas Independent School District, Dallas, Texas.

5. Tri-District Training Program: Carrebec High School, North Anson, Maine.

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